

2Peter 11-09-01a

This is Thursday, the 1st of September, 2011. We are continuing our study in 2nd Peter on an odd night since it's the Labor Day weekend. Coming up, we'll take a moment, as is our custom, to go to the Lord in prayer, and then we will begin.

Father, we're grateful for this opportunity to spend time looking at the truth of your word and seeking a better understanding of it, and looking for those fruitful applications and meaningful insights that come as we look into the perfect law of liberty, behold our own face, and hopefully we can walk away with a renewed motivation and renewed encouragement and strength and orientation to your plan and purpose. We pray that as we study this portion of Peter's 2nd letter, that God the Holy Spirit will be our teacher and enable us to see the truth clearly, to understand it, and to see its pertinence to our lives. We pray these things in Jesus' name.

Amen. Well, this letter, we've kind of taken an overview and seen the thematic direction that it is taking. Peter says, Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have obtained like precious faith with us.

And whether someone is high or low, he is both an apostle and a bondservant, and he says, your faith is just as precious as ours. And this is not just the belief system, but the life, the life of faith, and the opportunities that we have in Christ. We tend to think that some people are very important and some are not so important.

Peter says, no, your faith is like precious faith with us. And this is because it is through the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, and his righteousness is equal in us all. It's not like I've got more of Christ's righteousness than you do, or my portion of Christ's righteousness is better than yours.

This is the great equalizer. We are one in Christ. In Christ, there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male or female.

Why? Because the righteousness that we receive at salvation belongs to Jesus Christ. And that is of an intrinsic quality that transcends the recipient. Once we have it, it defines us.

We have the righteousness of Jesus Christ, and it is precious in God's sight, and he directs his grace toward it and his benefits to it. So anytime we start to get sort of a spiritual inferiority complex or even a spiritual superiority complex, we need to remember that it is the righteousness of Christ that enables us to stand. It isn't who and what we are.

It is who and what the Lord Jesus Christ is that defines us, that qualifies us, that makes us precious in God's sight. And it has its own quality that is far surpassing anything that we bring to the table. Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

Epinosis. We've talked about this. This is not just knowledge.

It is experiential knowledge. I was listening on the way down here, cutting my way through traffic on National Public Radio where they had a little featurette about global warming. I've had some passing interest in global warming this past week.

I was embroiled into a discussion that Matthew started and talking about global warming. There are people who think, you know, there's no question that there has been some warming. The question is, are people responsible or not? Is it anthropogenic? And a study has come out just this month published in Nature by the people at CERN overseas there.

And they did a special experiment. It's called Cloud. And they bombarded an atmosphere, a test atmosphere just like what's in the upper reaches of our planet with cosmic rays.

Because the debate is, do cosmic rays, which are either allowed or disallowed by our sun's magnetic activity, do those create clouds which then influence the global climate? Because when there are lots of cosmic rays striking the earth, and this is when the sun is relatively quiescent magnetically, and it doesn't interfere with the great galactic cosmic rays that are bombarding us, if the sun's magnetic field is not active, more of those cosmic rays hit us. And when they hit us, it creates aerosol particles and things in the upper atmosphere, which then seed clouds. Clouds form, reflect the sun's normal rays, and this cools the planet.

It's like a cloudy day. It's typically cooler. When the sun is highly active and deflects these cosmic rays, they don't create clouds.

The clouds dissipate, and more of our sun's rays strike the earth, and we have warming. This is the thought. So I say all that to say that as I was coming down, I heard a thing about global warming.

They said, well, since we know that global warming is a fact and we need to try to prepare for it, how many cities, with all of the economic problems that we've had, have actually been able to shake loose any budget funds to do something about warming? And many cities have it on their agenda, but very few have been able to do it. Only a few towns in California, like Newport Beach and Ventura and some of these places, have actually started trying to do something, like move things away from the beach because they think the sea level is going to rise, or do something to protect property that's on those cliff dwellings if the sea rises and so on. But this is the richest of the rich, and all the rest of these cities have basically done nothing.

And the global warming activists think, why aren't you doing more? It doesn't matter if you don't have any money for libraries and streets and paying your policemen and so on. You ought to be doing something about global warming. And what it reminded me is that, in their view, and looking at it from their view, they say global warming, and anthropogenic global warming in particular, is knowledge.

We know this is happening, so we should be getting ready for it. And they say, well, we know that it's likely to warm and sea levels likely to rise, but we just can't make that a priority right now. We're trying to just keep the fire trucks running and keep the city services going and keep the libraries open.

And we just don't have money. Yes, we know that something is coming. And there are things like increasing the size of storm drains.

If there's going to be more water and more stormage in one thing and another, they need to increase the size of the storm drains so that there's not flooding and so on in the streets. Well, where are they going to get the money to do this? So just having knowledge doesn't necessarily mean that you can implement it. That's the idea here in this first chapter.

Peter says, you can have knowledge. You can know that Jesus is coming back. You can know that there's a judgment.

You can know that we're supposed to be living in the power of God's spirit and the might of God's word and that these two things should be combining. We should be laying up for ourselves treasure in heaven. We should be reaching through that grace conduit and partaking of the divine nature.

And all of this sounds great. Just like the probability that the climate is going to get warmer. It is going to get warmer and has been getting warmer generally over the last century.

From we just don't know exactly what the cause is. It might be solar. It might be the onset of a long pattern that is eventually going to result in an ice age.

We're actually overdue for an ice age. I say we should make global warming because we are overdue for an ice age. And when we start plumbing in our ice age, people are going to say, how can we warm this planet up? They're going to want to reverse off.

Now we'll do the opposite. Use carbon, grow cows and build fires and do whatever. Let's change back hairspray and the old RF whatever that went in your car and bad refrigerants.

And let's do all the things that we made you stop doing because we're freezing. If you look at the graphs every, I forget, 240,000 years or something, supposed to be a big ice age. Well, we're like several tens of thousands of years overdue.

And I think we're just staving it off by pollutants and hairsprays and things. And I think we're doing a good thing. I think we ought to keep it up.

But knowledge doesn't always end. My most memorable illustration of this that leaves the biggest impression in my own mind is when you know that smoking is bad for you. And you know that it has already given you cancer.

Have you seen people that have a tracheotomy and they're sticking a cigarette in their tracheotomy to smoke because they're so hooked that they just can't quit? And I have seen somebody in the hospital sticking the cigarette in the thing and sucking that smoke into their lungs because they just can't get away from it. They can't free themselves from it. And the knowledge of how bad it is does not compel.

It does not motivate sufficiently to make a change. Now, as believers, Peter says, we have got to be motivated by our knowledge to change, to think differently, to live differently. It has to become epinosis.

Look at this. Look at the difference between verses 2 and 3 and verses 5 through 7. Just scan down through this. I'm going to read these verses and see if you can see the difference.

There's something going on in verses 2 and 3, and there's something going on in verses 5 through 7. See if you can catch it. In verses 2 and 3, it says, Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and Jesus our Lord. His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge, the epinosis of him who called us by glory and virtue.

By which glory and virtue we have been given these exceedingly great and precious promises so that through these promises you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world involved with these passionate cravings. I like Wiest's translation of lusts there. Passionate cravings.

Occasionally, a passionate craving can be a good thing. If you're separated from your spouse, your beloved soulmate for any length of time, you have a passionate craving to be reunited with them. My family's been gone less than a day, and I already miss them horribly.

You just want to be with those that you love, and that's a healthy thing. But if you've got a passionate craving for things that pertain to the old life, the old man, the old ways of thinking that do not have anything to do with salvation or Jesus Christ or reflecting God's glory, and to find out which it is, you say, well, I just have a passionate craving for my hobby, or I have a passionate craving for being with a certain group or doing a certain activity or being a part of a certain activity in life. I just really bend all of my efforts toward getting to that particular place.

Well, the question to ask is, is there an aspect of that that somehow reflects the glory of Jesus Christ? And you can almost always find a way to do that. You can be a member of a club, and when you're there, you are a light shining in a dark place. People know that you're a believer.

Your values and your principles and your virtue does that. I mean, you can find a way to do that. But the question is, is there a part of this that somehow reflects the glory of Jesus Christ? It needs to.

Otherwise, it may kind of be hooking into that old. But that's verses 2 and 3 and a little bit of 4. Now, let's look at 5 through 7. But also, for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, perseverance godliness, godliness brotherly kindness, to brotherly kindness love. What's the difference here in 2, 3, and 5 through 7? 2 and 3, if you look at it, this is what God has done.

God has given us these exceedingly great and precious promises. He has given us all things that pertain to life and godliness. But that gift and those promises are not sufficient in and of themselves to make everything the way it needs to be, right? If it was just a matter of God acting, if we were passive in this transaction, we would just be here as open vessels into which he would pour virtue, life, and godliness, and promises, and we'd be all set.

But he has done his part in giving these potentials and giving these resources. And now, we have to respond. There is a part that we must play.

There is an answer that we must give. God initiates, we respond. And we must respond.

It's not a matter of, well, I accepted Christ, I've got the promises, I'm a church-aged believer, so it ought to just be happening, you know, perseverance of the saints. I'm heading on the upward way. I'm just coasting.

I'm just riding on the divine promise train, and it's carrying me to glory. Sorry, no. For this very reason, giving all diligence.

This is a really interesting word where it says, giving all diligence. And this is the word I wanted to be sure to get to here. Which made me have to delay the start of class, even.

This is *par eis ferro*. *Par eis ferro*. And diligence is *spude*, which is the noun form from *spudazzo*, which means to strive.

And diligence means to expend an effort. This is used of runners running a race. You know, push for the tape.

Do your sprint. Finish strong is the idea in *spude*. And *par eis ferro*.

Ferro is the word that means to bring. P-H-E-R-O. *Ferro*, to bear or carry.

You can almost think of ferry across the river. I'm going to ferry across. I suspect, I didn't look, but I suspect that comes from *ferro*, to bear or carry.

Eis means through, and *para* means alongside. So, carry through alongside. And it comes to mean apply, bring to bear, effort.

So, you're going to carry this effort through and bring it alongside these things. Make every effort.

Bring diligence to bear.

Now, this is a very active, very powerful action combination here. God has given to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, but that doesn't make us godly. He's given us everything pertaining to life and godliness, but that doesn't secure inheritance or give us righteousness by faith.

He has given us everything necessary, but we have to apply diligent effort. Bring to bear a great striving because he has given us these things. And this is the wonderful balance between what God does and what God provides and what we do by way of response to that provision.

So, in verse 5, Peter says, because of all of these things that God has given and that God has promised and that God has done and this righteousness that he has granted to us through the Lord Jesus Christ, his glory and his virtue, *par eis ferro*, carry through and bring alongside spude, this diligent effort, bring it to bear, focus it and apply it. I had to take something apart this afternoon when I got home and you have to have the right tool. I had to get a particular long socket that would reach through this little hole in a car door.

And I had to set the ratchet the right way. And there is no other tool. You can't put a crescent wrench on there.

You can't use a pair of pliers. You can't use a screwdriver. There's only one tool that will get that particular thing loose.

And it is a long socket with a quarter inch drive. That's the only thing that will do it. If you haven't got that tool, you cannot get that thing apart.

And when you have it, you apply it and then you put effort on it. God has given us the tools. God has given us the situation.

And he says, you see that particular fastener and you see where it is. Here are your instructions. You need to get your socket wrench and put it on there and apply effort and tighten it, loosen it, whatever it may be.

He has provided everything. But we've got to pick up the tools. We've got to put them in the right place, get the right tool in the right place, and put effort into it and make that happen.

God is not going to take the thing apart for us. He's not going to reassemble it for us. He has given us instructions.

He has given us the situation. And he's given us all the tools. So take the right tool, put it where it needs to be, and put some effort in.

This is what Peter is saying. This is really the essence of the first half of this first chapter. So

giving all diligence is just the tip of the iceberg here.

Add to. We've got this little three-letter word add, but it's not three letters in Greek. This is epikorigeo, epikorigeo, and it means a lot more than add.

If you strip away the pieces here and get to the root, you have kore or koros. The noun from korigeo is koros, C-H-O-R-O-S. And this is where we get the English word C-H-O-R-U-S, koros.

Now, there's two etymologies at work here. There's two sources for this korigeo verb. If you read Vincent and some of the old graybeards from 150 years ago, they will say that back in the ancient Roman Empire, there would be these traveling choruses that would perform Greek tragedies, Greek plays.

And you have the chorus. It takes a lot of actors and a lot of players. You've got the chorus in the background, and you've got some character in the foreground, and he's carrying on about Electra or some such thing.

And then you've got the chorus back there making commentary. Well, for this traveling show to hit the road and go to different cities in the Roman Empire, somebody has to pay. Well, the state would not pay.

The state would find some wealthy nobleman and say, well, Gaius Julius Arcus, it's your turn this year to pay for the chorus. You are going to korigeo this show. You are going to underwrite it and undertake it and carry it through to completion.

You're going to amply provide for it. You are going to be the supply train this year for this chorus. And that may well be.

Amplify supply is how they choose to put it in the lexicon based on that etymology. However, the root meaning of chorus is just like on this organ. Some of these stops will say something about chorus on some organs.

And what that does is it takes two individual sounds and unites them. They make a duet or they make a trio or they make a quartet. When you combine several things together, they are stronger.

They are fuller. They are more complete. And that's your chorus.

You can have a soloist or you can have a chorus. If you hear the vocal majority and you've got those over 100 strong, lusty male voices all blasting right at you, you need no amplification. You can be sitting back where we sit in the 37th row someplace up in the nosebleed seats.

And when those guys hit that final crescendo, that loud finale, the air in the theater is just shaking. You can feel it in your chest. Those baritones are giving forth.

The basses are hitting that low note. That chorus makes something that is greater than the sum

of the parts. Any individual might have a very fine voice, but when they sing together, it's just so powerful and so beautiful.

You might have some soloists try to sing Handel's Messiah and do the Hallelujah chorus and have just one baritone and one soprano. You can do that. But when you get the whole chorus going, that's what makes it what it is, as great as it is.

This is epicorigeo. And this means put your chorus on it. Epi means upon.

Epi means intensify. You've got gnosis. Then you've got epinosis.

It's intensified. It's applied. It's laid onto a situation.

Here you've got epicorigeo. And he says, make this diligent turning of the socket wrench application of diligence and epicorigeo on top of your faith, virtue. Chorus, you've got faith, and that's singing a great solo.

Well, get your virtue to chime in and start building this chorus. You can see what a beautiful word choice it is in these verses. Add to your faith virtue.

I thought up here, God called us by his glory and virtue. In verse 3, he has made it available. He's made the divine nature available.

He's given us all this. So now, grab a hold of that and make it a part of the chorus. Pull out that stop.

And what does that mean in practical terms? You can kind of see the picture here linguistically, but in practical terms, what does it mean? How would we do this? We say, all right, Bible class is over. I'm going to go do something. I'm going to be living my normal routine.

So what would I do? All right. The first thing is I would walk by faith and not by sight. I'm going to trust God.

I want to lay hold of righteousness by faith. So whatever it is I'm doing, maybe I'm throwing in a load of laundry. Maybe I am cleaning up.

There's something needs vacuuming. Something needs picking up. Dishes need washing.

Whatever it may be. All of us do this at some point, even if it's just picking up after ourselves. You say, well, what's that got to do with the spiritual life? It has everything to do with the spiritual life.

This is where we are supposed to be living as Christians. So I see a cluttered room. I'm going to clean it up.

Now, what's going to go through my mind? Well, what if I'm not the one that messed this room

up? I can't believe how many times have I, look at this. What is this doing here? How hard would it be? And it starts to run. We start thinking somebody's at fault.

I'm a little unhappy. Little inconsiderate here. How come you're not holding up your end of the load? And we say, now, wait a minute.

I'm a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. This is somebody that lives in my house whom I love. And maybe they had something going on.

Let me give them the benefit of the doubt. The Lord Jesus Christ gives me the benefit of the doubt all the time. It's not my place to, unless I'm a parent and this is a child, but normally, it's not my place to get into a big bundle of angst over this.

Why don't I do this in a Christ-like way? Why don't I do this in a self-sacrificial way? I seem to recall that love is sacrificial towards self and beneficial. I'm not going to let that negative, bile stuff get started. I'm going to nip that right now.

I'm going to do this as a service. I'm going to do this as a gift. I'm going to do this as a gift of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I'm going to do it with a song in my heart and a spring in my step, and I'm going to look at it as an opportunity. I'm going to pretend like the Lord Jesus Christ left this stuff in this room. And this is my chance to do something for him.

I can clean this up for him. It's just as though he was in a hurry to go off and heal some people, and he couldn't make the bed, and he couldn't pick up these socks, and he couldn't empty this hamper and take out this trash, or whatever it might be, sweep this room. He was on a mission for his father, and he needed somebody to do this for him.

I can be the one to do it. I'm going to do it, and this is going to be great. I can do this for the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is what we have to do. We've got to take the things of the day and convert them. Faith.

Faith says it is a valuable thing to change my thinking in this way, to look at it as service to Jesus Christ instead of a chore because somebody else fell down on the job, or somebody else is a slob, or I'm a slob, and I'm mad at myself, and I'm just going down this spiraling downgrade of negativity. I say, no, I'm going to convert this little job right here into something that is going to put a jewel in the eternal inheritance, something to reflect the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. You know, the great thing about having treasure in heaven is however shiny it is, however jewel-like it is, the light in heaven comes from the Lamb, and it's going to refract and reflect that light of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The reason we want treasure is because its beauty is going to be marked by and revealed by and

amplified in the light of the Lord Jesus Christ. That's what makes it great. So we do this.

Now, this says, all right, I've got that first stage. I'm going to do this. By the way, if you have the old edification complex thing, this is orientation to God's grace.

God graciously gave to me. I can graciously give in return. He gave in the vertical realm.

I'm going to give in the horizontal realm. I'm going to love my one another's, and that is going to allow me to master the details of my life. This is just another way of saying the same thing.

These are all biblical truths. I am going to get on top of these details of life. I'm not going to sin.

I'm not going to just make this a human effort that has no eternal value. I'm taking charge of this thing. I'm converting it into spiritual stuff.

I'm redeeming the time here, whatever this chore may be. And Peter says, make every effort to put that socket wrench of faith on there and give it a good hard twist. And as you do this, epicorreego, chorus with it.

Not just faith. Don't just stop at faith. You can build on this thing.

That's just a baby step, looking at it as a spiritual task, looking at it as an opportunity to serve Christ. That's just your first step. We think, wow, I've just climbed a mountain.

I'm on top of Nebo here. I can see the promised land because I can mow the lawn as under the Lord. No.

Peter says, you're just getting started here. Now, chorus with that virtue. You can build on this thing.

This is a foundation stone. This is the bottom floor. Chorus with it, virtue.

That virtue that partakes of the divine nature. That virtue that God based things on up here in verse 3. He called us by glory. He called us by virtue.

Because this way of thinking and this perspective is something we're going to need in the kingdoms to come. And so I'm not just going to trust God that God will write this righteousness down in his book and that he'll be pleased. But I am going to add to that.

I'm going to chorus with it, virtue. And this means that if there are any other avenues of conversation, let's say the slob comes back while I'm in the middle of cleaning up and I just got through converting this thing by faith. Well, now, what would be the virtuous thing to do? Smile instead of frown.

Josh with them with a sense of humor instead of carping. And well, you know what I had to do

just now? You know what you left behind? Did you know I tripped over this nearly broke my neck because, you know, for the 15th? None of that. We're going to add to our faith.

We've we started well. Remember, Paul says to the Galatians, you were running well. Who tripped you? Who hindered you that you didn't build on that? So we're going to chorus with it, virtue.

We're going to find a way to keep that spiritual momentum going. And we've started. We've built a foundation of faith.

Now we're going to be virtuous. Think about the description of the virtuous woman. Think about the description of the virtuous man who is an elder in the church or a deacon in the church who is temperate, who is sober, who is a blessing.

People look and they're glad to see you. They're not like, oh, he's in a snitch. She's in a bad mood.

Oh, let me go find something to do in the garage until this blows over. Add to your faith virtue. Virtue is the personal attribute of nobility, of generosity, of reflected grace from God.

It is an intrinsic quality of soul. Virtue. You are a source of good things, not a source of negative things.

The clusters that come from you are clusters of goodness, not clusters of sins, not chain sins, not one sin creating another. You are a source of multiple fresh fruits, not a source of multiple moldy bread and bad, rancid stuff. Chorus with your faith virtue.

Each of these things now in the rest of the list is going to be another voice in the chorus. It's going to be harmonious. It's going to be melodious.

It is going to be strong. It is going to glorify God just like Handel's Messiah. That's what Peter is getting across with these beautiful words that he chooses.

It's not just add like a calculation. Add like, well, I can add clothes to the hamper. I can add rocks to a pile.

This is a harmonious, symphonious, beautiful chorus. And that's what we are called to. This is what Peter is encouraging us.

He says, look at what God has given you and look at what you can do with it. Well, we'll pause here and take a break. When we come back, we're going to pick up here in this building chorus and see what the rest of the voices are and then see what the ultimate outcome is.

What is this kingdom in verse 11? That's what we'll do when we come back.